

CORRY HOMESTEAD, CORRY HOUSE
Birmingham Industrial District
AL-69, 10 miles S of Jasper
Oakman
Walker County
Alabama

HABS No. AL-949-A

HABS
ALA
64-OK,
1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO
CORY HOMESTEAD, CORY HOUSE
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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ADDENDUM TO
CORRY HOMESTEAD, CORRY HOUSE

HABS No. AL-949-A

Location: One block west of AL 69, Oakman, a small community 10 miles south of Jasper, Walker County.

Owner: Harold Corry

Date of Construction: c. 1850s

Project Information: This report is based on written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

Significance: The early log house marks rural to industrial transition and wealth of farmer/coal mine operators.

Description: The Corry Family Homeplace is a one-story frame Gothic Revival style structure with twin gables punctuating the facade. The interior reflects the prosperity of the Corry family which has continuously occupied it through the years. It also contains the original log structure. The residence is situated on a broad lawn punctuated by shade trees. Portions of the surrounding area have been intensively mined (both underground and strip) for coal and timbered. Future plans call for the residence to be opened for tours.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Walker County remained relatively isolated during the nineteenth century. Small farms and a few small mining operations constituted area commerce. But when the railroad arrived in 1884, the little town of Day's Gap (now Oakman) boomed sprouting warehouses, stores, and saloons. This boom is chronicled in the Corry papers, a major collection of family and business papers, financial records, scrapbooks and other memorabilia representing the lives of three generations of the Corry family of Walker County and spanning the period from the late 1850s to the 1980s. Recently microfilmed by the University of Alabama Special Collections Library, the papers will be a primary resource for researchers of local history.

Joseph Mortimer Corry, builder of the Corry House, and a native of South Carolina, settled here in the 1850s. Both farmer and merchant, he had extensive land holdings. By leasing only his mineral rights instead of selling them, he prospered during the initial coal boom of the 1880s and continued in the coal business the rest of his life. His son Benjamin Franklin Corry and his wife Alice M. Corry, after spending 20 years in Oklahoma, returned to Oakman and to an involvement in the coal industry as operators of several small coal companies, and to work for such civic causes as the founding of the Alabama Benevolent Old Age Association and rural electrification. Alice Corry also successfully crusaded to get an accredited high school in Oakman.

Joseph Mortimer Corry, their son, also learned the coal business and remained involved all his life. From 1938 to 1962 he was also a rural mail carrier and deeply involved in Democratic politics. He corresponded with U.S. Congressional Representatives John H. Bankhead, Carter Manasco, Carl Elliott and U.S. Senator Lister Hill, all from Walker County. His involvement in politics and patronage at the grass roots level is well detailed in his correspondence.

Fourth generation Corry family member, Harold Corry is the current owner of the Corry family homestead and adjacent lands.

Sources Consulted

Interview with Harold Corry, 2/15/91

Corry Family Papers, University of Alabama Special Collections,
Tuscaloosa

Library Horizons, A Newsletter of the University of Alabama
Libraries, Vol. 3, No. 2. Spring 1990, pp. 3-4.